



Restoration and service underscore new neighbor



Cool weather was no deterrent for Mary Beth LaHaye's class of fifth grade students from the Hawley Environmental School. They toured the historic grounds last week as part of studying the Civil War. A first stop was The Surgeons Quarters which is vacant and on the restoration list through an enhanced use partnership with the Housing Authority City of Milwaukee.

The vacant, white-framed house that greets many as they drive up the hill from the freeway to the campus will have a new tenant.

The Surgeons Quarters (building 17), used way back when by surgeons and officers assigned to the Soldiers Home, will be restored in a partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM). The Housing Authority will front the \$500,000 renovation cost needed to make the building usable in providing rehabilitation services for the homeless. In turn, they will receive a \$572,000 grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for ten years of rental assistance for the clients.

The Surgeons Quarters – the name will remain unchanged – will be transformed into a 13-bed, single room occupancy home that will provide services to those who meet very specific HUD criteria. This is the first HUD funded single room occupancy housing for the homeless in the city.

The agreement, signed by the VA and the Housing Authority in August, provides for the priority placement of veteran applicants.

The Surgeons Quarters is part of the "historic district" and illustrates the small, neighborhood style, family and duplex structures that were provided to house the staff and their families at the Soldiers Home.

The 10,635 square foot building was constructed in 1887 and depicts the shingle style with colonial revival motifs and

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Milwaukee selected as site of National Veterans Wheelchair Games

"The gathering place by the waters," as named by Native Americans and today known as Milwaukee, will be the site of the 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games in 2007. Nearly 500 veterans will meet to compete in the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the nation June 18-24, 2007.

The games are presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Paralyzed Veterans of America with financial assistance from corporate, civic and veterans' service organizations. They are open to all U.S. military veterans who use wheelchairs due to spinal cord injury, neurological conditions, amputations or other mobility impairments.

The Medical Center and the Wisconsin Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans Association are hosting the games. Staffs have been working with the Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau for several months to bring the games to Milwaukee.

The games in 2005 will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota and 2006 in Anchorage, Alaska.

Events will take place at different venues in and around Milwaukee. The games will have an estimated economic impact of \$2.8 million to the Milwaukee area with participation of more than 1,000 athletes and delegates.

Milwaukee was chosen as the host city because the Medical Center has a long standing tradition of care for spinal cord injured veterans and the strong support of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Paralyzed

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interesting design features. The most striking, and visible from the south roadway, is the huge extended gable roof. It rises more than two stories from the roofs of the exterior porches to a ridge above the attic. It is divided in half by a tall brick chimney. In addition, there is a chimney at the north and south end of each of the two wings and a fourth in the middle. When built, fireplaces provided additional heat.

In order to assure that the historic nature of the building is protected, the Wisconsin State Historical Society will be reviewing the design plans submitted by HACM. In addition, HACM has a historic preservation architect on staff to handle preservation issues. These safeguards will assure that the restoration is conducted in such a fashion that all requirements of the preservation laws are met.

In 1990, the building was renovated for use as a state licensed childcare center. It was closed in April 2000 because of mold in the basement and has not been used since. The mold abatement phase of the project is complete, and renovation will soon follow.

Once occupied in the fall of 2005, the Hope House will staff The Surgeons Quarters and provide a full range of supportive services for the homeless in their efforts to achieve self-reliance.

Friends of Housing Corporation, a property management firm, will manage the property on a day-to-day basis.

“This new resource is sorely needed in the Milwaukee metropolitan area, and I am delighted that this partnership has been so successful,” said Glen W. Grippen, medical center director. “I am confident that this relationship will demonstrate that through innovation and new partnerships we can both improve the quality of life of veterans and protect the priceless historical heritage of our campus.”

Maureen Malloy contributed to this article.

Veterans of America. Milwaukee also demonstrated it has the venues and facilities needed to host an event of this magnitude.

Wheelchair sports promote rehabilitation and wellness through rigorous sports competition. For many newly injured veterans, this event is their first exposure to wheelchair sports. The Wheelchair Games gives many the opportunity to meet experienced wheelchair athletes, in fact, the camaraderie of fellow veterans sharing their experiences is as valuable as the competition.

Veterans will compete in track and field, swimming, basketball, weightlifting, softball, air rifle, quad rugby, nine ball, bowling, table tennis, archery, wheelchair slalom, power soccer, motorized rally and handcycling.



Adios amigo

It is not always easy to retire.

Before a small group of coworkers, **Harley J. Warner** gave his heartfelt goodbyes after **Glen W. Grippen**, medical center director, thanked him for his 36 years of federal service. Mr. Grippen complimented him on his compassionate, veteran-centered focus. Following the accolades, Mr. Warner said with a voice full of emotion, “It’s my time – I just got to do it. This is the moment I have been waiting for. It’s here.” He continued by thanking the people he worked with and the veterans he served. He said he would miss “the best job in the world.” The first order of business on retirement; a trip to Mexico. Mr. and Mrs. Warner left the following day.

Mr. Warner retired as the program manager for benefits management after over 14 years of service at the Medical Center. He began his VA career as a nursing assistant at the Fargo VA Hospital in 1971.



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